DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 157 970 UD 018 509

AUTHOR	Rogers, Donald D.
TITLE	RENP Costs Similar to Other Federal Comp-Ed Programs. RMC Report UR-328.
INSTITUTION	Gibboney (Richard A.) Associates, Inc., Kensington, Md.
SPONS AGENCY	National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
REPORT NO	RMC-UR-328
PUB DATE	Nov 77
NOTE	11p.; Not available in hard copy due to marginal legibility of the original document; For related documents, see UD 018 507-508 and UD 018 510-515
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Comparative Analysis; *Compensatory Education Programs; *Cost Effectiveness; *Educational Finance; Educational Resources; Elementary Secondary Education; *Federal Programs; *Program Costs; Program Descriptions; Reading Programs
IDENTIFIERS	*District of Columbia (Anacostia); *Response to Educational Needs Project

ABSTRACT

The Response to Educational Needs Project (RENP) is a compensatory education effort undertaken in Washington, D.C., to attack reading problems at a community level. In this paper the following questions are addressed: (1) Can the Federal government afford RENP? (2) Is RENP more expensive to support as a Federal program than it would be with Title I funds? The District of Columbia RENP and programs that may be compared with it are described. The cost of these programs is presented. It is concluded that RENP costs no more than 14 Title I programs included in the Instructional Dimensions study. (Author/MC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

JUL 31 1978

ED157970

RMC Report
UR-328

RENP COSTS SIMILAR TO OTHER FEDERAL COMP-ED PROGRAMS

Donald D. Rogers

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

November 1977

Prepared for
National Institute of Education

Under subcontract to
Richard A. Gibboney Associates, Inc.

CUDO 15508

CONTENTS

General Problem 1
Description of RENP 1
Comparison Programs 2
Cost Comparisons 4
Conclusions 6
References 8

GENERAL PROBLEM

This is the second in a series of short papers about the cost of the Response to Educational Needs Project. The first paper concluded that wide scale replication of RENP requires federal support because local education agencies cannot afford to operate the program with state and local funds (see Rogers, 1977). Furthermore, the paper concluded that the best ways to disseminate RENP were to either establish a federally funded program or to encourage LEAs to operate RENP with funds provided under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Title I, ESEA). These conclusions raise another problem. Can the federal government afford RENP? Is RENP too expensive to support as a federal program? Is RENP too expensive to support with Title I funds? The purpose of this paper is to address these questions.

The remainder of this paper will be divided into four major sections. The first will present a brief description of RENP. The second will present a brief description of programs that will be compared with RENP. The third will present the cost of these programs. And, finally, the fourth will present the conclusions that may be drawn from the comparisons.

DESCRIPTION OF RENP

The Response to Educational Needs Project (RENP) represents an effort on the part of the Anacostia community of the District of Columbia to attack the reading problem at a community level. RENP, which is funded by the National Institute of Education, operates in grades 4 through 6 within 10 elementary schools and in grade 8 in one junior high school in Anacostia. Although RENP emphasizes training teachers to meet the needs of the educationally disadvantaged, it also attempts to attack the reading problem on several fronts simultaneously including the classroom, the community, the home, and within specially designed reading laboratories. Salient dimensions of the RENP approach include:

- The use of Program Facilitators, similar to "Master Teachers" who are permanently based in a given school to provide training to all teachers in grades 4, 5, and 6 on a regular basis.

- Attempts to meet the individual needs of each client-teacher by diagnosing particular areas of strengths and weakness of each teacher through the administration of a comprehensive needs assessment and continued monitoring of each teacher's progress.
- The use of aides to work with individual students on specific reading skills, and who are capable of "taking over" the classroom, when teachers are receiving training.
- Specialized training which is integrated into the normal work day and is not defined as "extra duty."
- While the training programs for teachers are individualized, all teachers are trained in the use of the "diagnostic-prescriptive approach" to the teaching of reading so they may better meet the individual needs of their students.
- The use of reading laboratories within each school to which students are sent on a regular basis to work on specific reading skills.
- The use of community organizers who work with parents and the community at large, providing information about the program and helping parents to better understand how they can help their children's reading progress.
- The use of existing school curricula to improve reading skills. RENP does not stress "gimmicks" or special material. It seeks to help teachers better use material which is readily available to them.

COMPARISON PROGRAMS

One major purpose of this paper is to compare RENP with other federally funded programs. Unfortunately, the number of comparisons that can be made is severely constrained by the availability of reasonably accurate cost information. Most agencies in the public sector including the U.S. Office of Education, state education agencies, and local education agencies use a fudiciary or fund accouting systems. Most education cost studies simply analyze the current expenditures paid from the one or possibly two funds that provide the program's primary support. Normally, a great deal of significant support provided by as many as five or six secondary sources is simply ignored. This results in grossly inaccurate under estimates of a program's cost. (For a thorough discussion of this problem see Rogers et al., 1977.)

During the last 10 years a new educational costing procedure called the resource approach has been developed. This procedure analyzes all

resources used to operate a program; accounts for support provided from all sources, and yields accurate estimates of a program's cost. Because this procedure is still relatively new, it has not been widely used. However, it was used to analyze the cost of RENP and in a few other major studies. Although a large number of cost analysis studies were reviewed, only three provided cost information comparable to the RENP cost data. Therefore, they will be used as a basis for comparison.

The Instructional Dimensions Study (Brady, Clinton, and Sweeney, 1977) provides the most current data. This study was conducted during the 1976-77 school year and was a field study of the impacts of instructional practices and teacher characteristics on student achievement and attitudes toward reading and mathematics at the first and third grade levels. The reported average cost per student for third grade students in Title I supported reading and mathematics programs will be presented in this paper and compared with the cost of RENP. These costs are the averages of the average cost per student in the 14 local education agencies included in the Instructional Dimensions Study.

The next most recent study is the Cost Analysis of Follow Through Projects (Rogers et al., 1977). This study was conducted during the 1975-76 school year and analyzed the costs of operating 20 different Follow Through models. Although the Follow Through program focuses on children in kindergarten through the third grade, each of the 20 different Follow Through models has a different educational approach. This paper will present the cost of four of these models. The four with the highest costs for parent and staff training were selected because of the emphasis RENP places on training.[1] However, it should be noted that the Cost Analysis of Follow Through conlcuded that the observed differences in the costs of different models were not statistically significant. Therefore, any of the 20 could have been selected and compared with RENP without effecting the results of the comparison.

The oldest data to be presented in this paper is from the 1974-75 Michigan Cost Effectiveness Study (Research, Evaluation, and Assessment Services of the Michigan Department of Evaluation, 1976). This study

---

1. A comparison of training costs is presented in Appendix G.

reports the average cost per student for students in Title I reading programs in 34 local education agencies within the state of Michigan. These programs were in 68 schools and served students in kindergarten through the sixth grade during the 1974-75 school year.

COST COMPARISONS

Table 1 reports the adjusted average cost per student for four Follow Through models, RENP, the 14 programs in the Instructional Dimensions Study, and the 34 programs in the Michigan study. The next section of this paper will compare these costs. This section will be used to explain the adjustments used to obtain the costs reported in Table 1.

Table 1

PROGRAM AVERAGE COST PER STUDENT

Program	Adjusted Average Cost per Student
Culturally Democratic Learning Environment Model[a]	$2,699
Learning Systems Corp. Early Childhood Model[a]	1,441
Bank Street Model[a]	1,954
RENP (reading and mathematics)	1,936
Role Trade Model	1,918
Instructional Dimensions (reading and mathematics)	1,915
Michigan Study (reading and mathematics)[b]	1,828
RENP (reading only)	1,640
Instructional Dimensions (reading only)	1,611
Instructional Dimensions (mathematics only)	1,588
RENP (mathematics only)	1,580
Michigan Study (reading only)	1,580
Michigan Study (mathematics only)[b]	$1,530

a. Follow Through models.

b. Estimated by assuming mathematics costs are 83 percent of reading costs.

The study of the cost of Follow Through found that the cost of operating a Follow Through project is related to the cost of operating the LEA's regular normal program. The cost of operating Follow Through increased as

the cost of the regular program increased. This indicates the cost of Follow Through is being biased by regular costs. An attempt was made to remove this bias by adjusting costs. A simple adjustment was used. The average cost of the regular program was subtracted from the average cost of the Follow Through program. The remainder is called the incremental cost of Follow Through and is an estimate of how much more Follow Through costs. Next the national average cost per student was determined. This was considered to be the best estimate of how much a typical LEA spends on its regular program. This national average was found to be $1,284 (Market Data Retrieval, 1976). Finally, an adjusted cost was determined by adding the incremental cost to the national average. This procedure removes much of the bias caused by the cost of local regular programs.

The Follow Through costs reported in Table 1 are identical to those in the Follow Through report (Rogers et al., 1977, p. 38). The RENP costs presented in Table 1 were computed by adding the incremental cost of RENP to $1,284 (see Rogers, 1977, p. 9).[1] The Instructional Dimensions costs presented in Table 1 were computed by adding the incremental costs of "pull out" mathematics and reading programs to $1,284. The incremental cost was defined as the remainder of the average cost per student in the regular sample subtracted from the average cost per student in the pull out sample.[2] The Michigan study cost for reading was computed by adding the incremental costs for Title I reading programs to $1,284. The incremental cost was the remainder of the average cost per student for classroom reading activities subtracted from the average cost per student for all compensatory education reading classes.[3]

The Michigan study did not determine the cost per student in the mathematics program. These costs were estimated to provide a broader basis for

---

1. Additional information on the cost of RENP is presented in Appendices A, B, C., and D.

2. Additional information on the adjusted Instructional Dimensions costs is presented in Appendix E.

3. Additional information on the adjusted Michigan study costs is presented in Appendix F.

comparison. Table 2 indicates that in the RENP program, the average incremental cost per student for mathematics was approximately 83 percent of reading cost. This ratio is higher for the Instructional Dimensions study. To be conservative, the average incremental cost per student for the Michigan study was estimated by multiplying the incremental cost for reading by .83. This product was added to $1,284 to obtain the adjusted cost per student.

The costs persented in Table 2 were not formally adjusted for inflation.

Table 2

RATIO BETWEEN THE COST OF MATHEMATICS AND READING PROGRAMS

Program	Average Incremental Cost per Student		Ratio (mathematics/ reading)
	Mathematics	Reading	
RENP	296	356	.83
Instructional Dimensions	304	327	.93

This type of an adjustment is appropriate because costs were determined in different time periods. However, adding incremental costs to a standard base of $1,284 serves as a substantial but not a complete adjustment for inflation. The RENP and Instructional Dimensions costs were collected in the same year and would not require an adjustment. The Follow Through costs were collected one year earlier, and the Michigan costs were obtained two years earlier. Both should be increased to be strictly comparable. Because such increases will not effect the relative comparisons, these adjustments were not made.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper began with questions about the cost of RENP. Can the federal government afford RENP? Is RENP too expensive to support as a federal program? Is RENP too expensive to support with Title I funds? The data presented in Table 1 provides the answer.

The federal government has supported Follow Through for approximately 11 years. In recent years annual Economic Opportunity Act Follow

Through expenditures have been approximately $50 million and have supported approximately 175 projects. A similar level of funding could support a similar number of RENPs. Because Follow Through has received continuous funding over a long period, because Follow Through has not been criticized as a prohibitively expensive program, and because RENP costs no more than Follow Through; it is reasonable to conclude that RENP would not be too expensive for direct federal support.

Table 1 also indicated that RENP costs are similar to the costs of other program that are currently being supported by LEAs with Title I, EASE, funds. The average adjusted cost per student for RENP mathematics and reading is only $21 greater than the cost derived from the Instructional Dimensions study. This is a cost different of approximately 1 percent and can readily be attributed to change or measurement error. The best conclusion is that RENP costs no more than the 14 Title I programs included in the Instructional Dimensions study. The same conclusion may be drawn from the comparison of RENP and the 34 programs in the Michigan study. The difference in cost is less than 6 percent. This difference would disappear if the Michigan costs were adjusted for inflation. Therefore, the data indicate that RENP costs no more than the average cost of 48 programs supported with Title I, ESEA, funds. This leads to the conclusion that cost should not prevent LEAs from operating RENP as a Title I program. Furthermore, a dissemination strategy that encourages supporting RENP with Title I funds will not fail because of the cost of RENP.

REFERENCES

Brady, M.E., Clinton, C., and Sweeney, J.M. Final Report of the Instructional Dimensions Study. Washington, D.C.: Kirschner Associates, Inc., 1977.

Market Data Retrieval. National Comparison Local School Costs: 1975-76. Westport, CT: Author, 1976.

Research, Evaluation, and Assessment Services of the Michigan Department of Education. Report of the 1974-75 Michigan Cost-Effectiveness Study. Washington, D.C.: Capitol Publications, 1976.

Rogers, D.D. et al. Follow Through Planned Variation Experiment, Vol. IV: Cost Analysis. Bethesda, MD: RMC Research Corporation, 1977.

Rogers, D.D. RENP Unlikely Without Federal Support. Bethesda, MD: RMC Research Corporation, 1977.